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CITY PAGES

Dec 11-17, 2019

VOLUME 39 | NUMBER 2036





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ISSN 0744-0456. City Pages is published weekly by Star Tribune Media Company, LLC. City Pages is located at 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. City Pages is available free of charge, limited to one copy per reader. Additional copies of the current issue may be purchased at the City Pages office for \$1, payable in advance. No person may, without prior written permission of City Pages, take more than one copy of each City Pages weekly issue. Subscriptions are available for \$100 per year. Subscription orders must include cheek or money order payable to City Pages, and should be mailed to City Pages Subscriptions, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Minneapolis, Cotty Pages, 650 3rd Ave. S., Ste. 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488.

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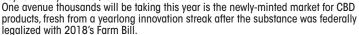


How CBD can help you through the holidays

The Christmas and Chanukah seasons are upon us, and as the year brings families and loved ones closer to one another, it also brings them closer to stress and anxiety. The end of the year is hard on people. Money problems, cross-country travel and personal issues with family can sometimes bring stress and worry to people and signs of anxiety like suicide rates tend to be higher around the holidays.

Amid these worrying aspects of a traditionally cheery time of year, there's no wonder why people might seek out-of-the-box solutions, but there are also less weighty concerns: What to think up for that hard-to-

buy-for family member, for instance.



Scientific conclusions are far from evident, but early studies have shown connections between CBD and the body's endocannabinoid system, or ECS, to regulate bodily functions. There's even a prescription epilepsy drug based on CBD.

Meanwhile, ordinary people have found many uses for CBD oils, flower and other products. Testimonials show they love CBD for their anxiety, insomnia, chronic pain

problems, inflammation and other common issues.

What any newcomer to the CBD market, especially this time of year, will notice is that it can be hard to tell quality CBD products from junk. With the surge in the market there are so many newcomers and gas-station cannabis experts that you'd almost think trust is a four-letter word.

Luckily, Nothing But Hemp has made a name in Minnesota and around the country for its educational capabilities and high-quality, lab-tested products.

Because of how variable hemp products and their manufacture can be, the Nothing But Hemp team keeps keep monitoring on all the brands and product lines it keeps on its shelves, hand-selecting the best in the industry and dropping products that don't keep up with their standards.

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repeatedly proven to produce some of the highest quality organic, non-additive CBD oils. Minny Grown CBD also shows Nothing But Hemp's commitment to local growers and business. With fine CBD isolates and full-spectrum oils, Minny Grown's flavors include pumpkin pie, spearmint and lemon lime.

Nothing But Hemp has locations in Minneapolis' Uptown neighborhood on Lake Street and Lyndale Avenue and in St. Paul on Grand Avenue. You can also find Nothing But Hemp shops in White Bear Lake, Forest Lake, Cloquet and Maplewood, Minnesota. Stop by a Nothing But Hemp location soon for all your holiday wellness and gift-giving

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THE SHORTLIST



GLEN STUBBE/STAR TRIBUNE

THE STAT SHEET

\$1.3 billion

Minnesota's estimated budget surplus going into the 2020 legislative season

\$2 million

Grant awarded to Minnesota for sexual assault investigations after an estimated 1,700 untested rape kits were discovered last month

5.8%

"Interim rate increase" for CenterPoint Energy customers beginning January 1



Grocery stores remaining in Farmington after Family Fresh Market's sudden closure, making the suburb an unlikely food desert

"Remember pizza rat? This is him now. Feel old yet?"

Reader Jake Nelson responds to "Dead, frozen, dressed-up Minneapolis rat is pretty much all of us" at citypages.com.

SURCHARGE SUIT

HEALTH AND WELLNESS fees have been cropping up at more Twin Cities restaurants, but Blue Plate Restaurant Company just became the first to get sued over it. Twin Cities Business reports that last month, Christopher Ashbach filed a class action suit against Blue Plate. Though the group discloses the charge on its menus, noting that it helps pay for employee healthcare at its restaurants (Mercury, the Freehouse, the Lowry, and more), the complaint says the charge "creates a likelihood of confusion or misunderstanding." Ashbach wants to "recoup the fee that's been paid by consumers." to the tune of more than \$50,000.

POPULAR STORIES

AT CITYPAGES.COM

'Ayd Mill Road': The absurdly local **LIL NAS X** parody St. Paul... gets

Dead, frozen, dressed-up

MINNEAPOLIS RAT

is pretty much all of us

MINNEAPOLIS COPS

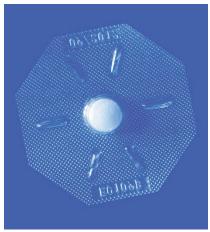
to cyclists: It's 'not smart' to ride in snow and ice

Nearly 100 semi-stranded Minnesota teens got the **SKI TRIP** they'll never forget

With WRECKTANGLE, the Cities finally gets its Detroit-style pizza specialist

PHARMA CON

Minnesota woman sues drug stores for not selling emergency contraception



GETTY / JACQUES LOIC

Andrea Anderson says her small-town pharmacist told her he was "uncomfortable" with filling her prescription.

n January of last year, Andrea Anderson of McGregor, Minnesota and her long-term romantic partner had what she calls "a little oops."

"Our contraception failed," she

She and her partner have been in a committed relationship for a long time, and they're already raising a child together, but weren't ready for another. For the first time in her life, Anderson called her doctor and asked about getting emergency contraception.

Once she got her prescription, she set out to get it filled at the only pharmacy in town: Thrifty White. (Tiny McGregor's population came in just shy of 370 people in 2017.) After a call to make sure they had the medication on hand, she got an unexpected followup from the pharmacist on duty.

Anderson says the man on the line told her he wasn't comfortable filling her prescription. At first, she thought maybe the pharmacist had concerns about the contraceptive interacting with her allergy or asthma medication. After a bit more probing, she realized it wasn't anything like that. It was the drug itself that was the problem.

"So, what you're saying is because of your religious beliefs, you're not going to fill my prescription?" she asked. She says he repeated that he "wasn't comfortable" and told her to try another pharmacy.

Annoved, to put it mildly, Anderson called a CVS in Aitkin. The person on the other end of the line allegedly claimed their wholesaler didn't carry the contraceptive pill-and that the Walgreens in nearby Brainerd couldn't help her, either.

Anderson tried Walgreens anyway, and was relieved to learn they could get her the pill after all. Well, maybe.

"Their only concern was that it might be delayed because of the snowstorm,"

Anderson climbed in her car with her 2-and-a-half-year-old and drove an hour out of her way, through blowing snow, to reach the Walgreens. The experience rattled her, and she started calling around, trying to figure out where and how to report the pharmacies that refused to help her.

Then she found Gender Justice. This week, the human rights nonprofit and Anderson filed suit against the McGregor Thrifty White and the Aitkin CVS. (Neither the McGregor store owner nor CVS responded to interview requests.) Gender Justice Legal Director Jess Braverman says by refusing to sell to Anderson, the pharmacies had violated the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

"It's really important that people's medical needs not be subject to the personal beliefs of health care providers," Braverman says.

After the filing, the pharmacies will get the chance to respond before the case is resolved or goes to trial. In the meantime, Anderson is "excited" to be speaking out, and worried about other women in and around her town.

"In that area, there are so many young girls... who may not have the knowledge and resources I have," she says.

Anderson's picturing a scared teen who wouldn't know where to turn to for help. That teen should know they don't have to "accept" that. Anderson certainly won't.

-HANNAH JONES

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LOOKING BACK ON TEN YEARS OF GROWTH, LOSS, AND UNPREDICTABLE CHANGE

BY KEITH HARRIS

ow long ago was 2010? Think of it this way: First Avenue, just six years out of bankruptcy, made headlines for opening a small restaurant next to the Entry and painting its walls.

The Depot seemed like a pretty big deal at the time. But by the end of the decade, with the club on the cusp of its silver anniversary, this addition was dwarfed by First Ave's many acquisitions and expansions. First Ave now owns the Turf Club, the Fine Line, and the Fitzgerald, operates the restored Palace Theatre, and may soon operate a proposed amphitheater in north Minneapolis.

One way to think of the past decade of music in the Twin Cities, then, is as a period of growth and consolidation. Even as First Ave grew into a business empire, the Current thrived and expanded, and Rhymesay-

ers' Soundset became a world-class festival featuring the biggest names in rap. Even City Pages is still here. Though the world at large may feel tumultu-

ous, our artistic institutions feel rooted, solid, and, if you want to tempt fate, permanent.

Our musical history feels similarly settled. Dylan got a big downtown mural. The Replacements reunited and were commemorated with a definitive biography. Hüsker Dü received the box set it deserved. And Prince became an industry, generating a wealth of historical and biographical research, as well as plenty of tourist dollars, though he was often recalled with a morbid solemnity unbefitting an artist

who repeatedly told us that the only way to deal with death and the apocalypse was to fuck. To reduce his legacy to one anthem, "Purple Rain," is a grave insult

to the memory of his perpetual boner.

Prince's death undercut the seeming predictability of music in the Twin Cities. And if you're in a darker mood, you could also reduce the past decade to a litany of deaths, many arriving far sooner than anyone imagined: Eyedea,

Grant Hart, Ed Ackerson, and so many more. Cherished venues would be lost as well, particularly the Triple Rock. At times we seemed to exist within a state of perpetual mourning.

Whoever "we" are. In a technologically linked global economy, what does it even mean to be local? Lizzo, the most prominent musician of the decade with Minnesota connections, wasn't born here and became a superstar only after she relocated to Los Angeles. Yet outlets like this cover her regularly for a simple reason: People in Minnesota still want to read about her. Plenty of musicians who identify in some way as Minnesotans live on the coasts for much of the year. "Local" is a tag you choose, rather than a description of where you live.

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The story of local music over the past decade reflects what's happening in our cities generally. As Minneapolis in particular grows more expensive, the gaps between the comfortable and the struggling widen. When fans and musicians talk about the Triple Rock, it's not just scene nostalgia—it's that a certain type of proving ground for fledgling artists is being lost.

And yet, the biggest sign of health is that local music seems to reflect national trends without mimicking them. A time traveller from the heyday of indie rock,

"Local" is a tag you choose, rather than a description of where you live.

25 years ago or so, would recognize a lot of the music being pounded out in clubs like Mortimer's, though they'd probably also notice that fewer cis-het white guys are doing the pounding. But these bands don't feel retro—younger musicians have found a musical language that they can translate in their own idiosyncratic ways.

Even more exciting are those musicians, predominantly of color, who can't be pigeonholed in traditional African-American genres, can't really even be called a scene. Though elements of past music surfaces in what they do, they owe less to the funk of the Minneapolis Sound or the underground hip-hop of Rhymesayers and Doomtree than to an unclassifiable vibe. Astralblak are the forebears of this rhythmic, electronic, atmospheric melange, and artists as different as Lady Midnight and Dua Saleh, who released the best music locally this year, have carried it forward.

If you start with where things are today and work backward, much of what's happening in local music in 2019 feels inevitable in retrospect. But if many years ago-let's say in 1999, to pick a particularly resonant date-you'd asked folks who was more likely to survive to 2020, Prince or First Avenue, how many would have guessed correctly? There was a time when the club's financial health seemed in doubt more often than not, just as there was a time when Prince's relationship with his city was far more contentious, and when musicians who left for the coasts started new lives rather than touting their Midwestern roots for the folks back home.

Over the next ten years, there will be changes that seem inevitable to people but that we could never predict today. And so, as we grow more aware of our past than ever, the trick is to notice the people who are already making tomorrow's history.



WHAT HAPPENED?

A year-by-year timeline of the past decade in Minnesota music

- BY KEITH HARRIS

CRAMMING EVERY NOTABLE local music event from the past decade into a few pages isn't easy. It's not even possible. So don't think of this timeline as a comprehensive guide to the past 10 years. Think of it as a series of snapshots to jog your memory.

2010

Gayngs, a 22-person supergroup led by Ryan Olson and featuring everyone from Justin Vernon to P.O.S, celebrates the release of *Relayted* at First Avenue in May with a two-night event, "The Last Prom on Earth." In the cruelest tease of the year, Prince shows up one night and loiters in the wings with his guitar, never to step onstage.

Eyedea

In a big year for local music releases, **Dessa** puts out her first solo album, *A Badly Broken Code*, while Chris Koza's **Rogue Valley** project releases an album for each season.

First Avenue gets to work. The club opens the **Depot Tavern**, and that summer the exterior walls get a new paint job. In other venue news, the Aster Cafe at St. Anthony Main begins hosting music.

The **Jayhawks** lineup that recorded *Tomorrow the Green Grass* reunites for three Mainroom shows, and announce another show for the following year.

RIP: Micheal Larsen, a.k.a. Eyedea, of an accidental drug overdose, mourned at an allstar memorial concert held on what would have been his 29th birthday; Bobby Meide, drummer for the Flamin' Ohs, 59.

2011

After recovering from a serious heart attack, **Bobby Z**, Prince's first drummer, announces that the Revolution will reform for a benefit at First Avenue to raise heart disease awareness the following February—the band's first show together since 2003. A series of benefits is also held for former Hüsker Dü drummer **Grant Hart**, after he loses many of his belongings in a house fire.

The married duo Alexei and Channy Moon Casselle disband Roma di Luna. Channy (as Channy Leaneagh) launches **Poliça**, recording a full-length with Gayngs producer Ryan Olson while Alexei continues performing in Kill the Vultures. Speaking of Gayngs, they call it quits too in March.

Minnesota musicians, including Brother Ali, Toki Wright, Sean Anonymous, Guante, Mayda, Grant Hart, and Jer-

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emy Messersmith, throw their support behind the OccupyMN protests.

RIP: Ruth Adams, beloved accordionist for longtime Nye's attraction the World's Most Dangerous Polka Band, 79; former Bash & Pop bassist Kevin Foley, 52; Elliot Hill, drummer for the Softrocks, 26.

2012

Former Replacements guitarist Bob "Slim" Dunlap suffers a serious stroke. Jim Walsh organizes a "Hoot for Slim" at the Amsterdam, while Replacements Paul Westerberg and Tommy Stinson team with Kevin Bowe and Peter Anderson to record a four-song benefit EP.

The Brick, AEG Live's new downtown Minneapolis venue, opens in March with a Jane's Addiction show so disastrous that future bookings decide to play elsewhere. Unable to live down its bad rep, the club is overhauled and reopens as Mill City Nights.

Howler frontman Jordan Gatesmith talks shit about the Minneapolis music scene in a U.K. interview, calling out the 4onthefloor as "Mumford & Sons crap." The 4ot4 respond by recording a song set to the tune of the Mumfords' "The Cave" called... what else? "Mumford & Sons Crap."

Y.N.RichKids, young rappers from a North Community YMCA after-school program, go viral with "Hot Cheetos and Takis."

A three-woman rap group called the Chalice, featuring a young transplant named Lizzo, drops its debut EP and eventually wins Picked to Click. Lizzo will win Picked to Click as a solo artist the following year.

RIP: Daniel Levy, 21, son of the Honeydogs' frontman Adam Levy, takes his own life after a battle with mental illness.

2013

The Suburbs' "Love Is the Law" becomes the unofficial anthem of marriage equality, and the band celebrates the passage of the Freedom to Marry Bill with a concert downtown. Chan Poling and co. also release their first album in 27 years, Si Sauvage, in August.

Other notable local releases include Har MarSuperstar's Bye Bye 17, featuring "Lady, You Shot Me," and Low's The Invisible Way.

The rumors are true: Detroit rapper Danny **Brown** was indeed blown by a female fan during a Triple Rock concert. "I just felt embarrassed because I wasn't all the way hard yet," he later told Complex. Yeah, that's what they all say.

RIP: Zach Sobiech, 18, known for his viral hit "Clouds"; Cabooze manager Jason Aukes Rock, 36; journalist and A&R man Tim Carr, 57; Phantom Vibration guitarist Henry Mackaman, 21; groundbreaking concert promoter Sue McLean, 63; First Avenue staffer Billy Sverkerson, 60.

2014

Free earplugs become the law of the land after the Minneapolis City Council requires most music venues to provide protection for their patrons. Not in St. Paul, though, where the renovated Turf **Club** reopens under the ownership of First Avenue, which acquired the bar in late 2014. (See that smooth transition I made there?) The kitchen and bathrooms are new, the ceilings are higher, but the vibe is pretty much the same. Another storied Minneapolis venue fails to be





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resurrected, however, when the 400 Bar's plans to reopen at the Mall of America are quashed.

The **Replacements** reunion finally comes to Minnesota with a show at the soon-to-be-demolished Midway Stadium in St. Paul. The music is great. The jackets are plaid. The fans are sloshed.

In **Doomtree** news, P.O.S finally gets a new kidney, and celebrates with a solo show at First Ave. The rest of the crew hold their 10th and final Blowout in December and release their new album *All Hands* the following January.

RIP: Run Westy Run founding member Kyle Johnson, 54; local music writer Tom Hallett, 50.

2015

Vieux Carré opens in the old Artists' Quarter space. The Sound Gallery closes in the North Loop to make way for condos or some bullshit. A 30-square-foot chunk of the First Avenue ceiling collapses during a Theory of a Deadman show, injuring several concertgoers (none seriously), and causing the club to shut down for a couple weeks. Oh, and one day there isn't a \$50,000 Bob Dylan mural painted by Brazilian artist Eduardo Kobra at the corner of Fifth and Hennepin, and the next day, well, there is.

The Current makes a few major personnel shifts. DJ Barb Abney is unexpectedly fired; she quickly finds a new home at Go 96.3. Later in the year, Mary Lucia takes a leave of absence to recover from her experience with a stalker. And David Campbell hands *The Local Show* off to

Northwest Community Television reports that **Sisqó** lives in Maple Grove, where, he says, "families are just living and exercising and riding bikes—no thongs out

here!" City Pages will not fucking shut up about it.

Swensson.

Big doings in the local rap world. **Rhyme-sayers Entertainment** holds its 20th anniversary concert at Target Center, while Doomtree throws their first-ever Doomtree Zoo festival at CHS Field in St. Paul. And Allan Kingdom, the winner of the 2014 Picked to Click poll, appears on Kanye West's song "All Day" and joins Ye onstage at the Billboard Music Awards.

RIP: John Kuker, owner of Cannon Falls' famed Pachyderm recording studio, 40; drummer Thomas "Tommy Gunn" Alsides, 52; Justin Lowe, guitarist and co-founder of Twin Cities metalcore band After the Burial, found dead near the St. Croix River, 32; and 48-year-old non-Minnesotan Scott Weiland of Stone Temple Pilots and Velvet Revolver, found dead on his tour bus in Bloomington.

2016

Go 95.3 FM, the first modern hip-hop station in the Twin Cities since 2010, launches under the ownership of the Pohlads and the musical direction of Mr. Peter Parker.

Mill City Nights closes, but a whole lotta new music venues sprout up. The **James Ballentine VFW Post 246** christens a 400-capacity concert space, bringing live music back to Uptown. The Warming House opens as an intimate new space in south Minneapolis. The Viking Bar reopens on the West Bank. The Hook and Ladder Theater & Lounge takes over the Patrick's Cabaret space in Longfellow. And then there's U.S. Bank Stadium, which



TOM WALLACE / STAR TRIBUNE

immediately faces complaints about its boomy, echoey sound.

Bands break up, as bands will: Minnesota-spawned pop-punks Motion City Soundtrack, along with Murder Shoes, ON AN ON, Frankie Teardrop, In Defence, and GRRRL PRTY.

McNally Smith College of Music abruptly shuts its doors just before the end of the semester, leaving employees and students in the lurch, and declares bankruptcy the following year.

RIP: Fargo-born pop star Bobby Vee, 73; Nye's pianist "Sweet Lou" Snider, 81; Monty Lee Wilkes, veteran First Avenue sound engineer, 54. Oh yeah, and Prince, 57.

2017

Following an extensive rehab project, the **Palace Theatre** re-opens as a music venue in St. Paul, owned by the city and managed by First Avenue, and within weeks it's hard to remember how we ever lived without it. Across the river United Properties reveals its initial plans for a 2,000-capacity space near Target Field, to be operated by concert booking behemoth Live Nation and modeled after the historic Fillmore theater in San Francisco. Even more good news for music fans: Whittier



dive bar Mortimer's, under new ownership, begins booking live music toward the end of the year.

The Twin Cities loses several institutions. Confronting "major health issues," Arnellia Allen closes her St. Paul supper club Arnellia's after a 25-year run. Treehouse Records owner Mark Trehus shutters the historic record store on the corner of 26th and Lyndale, formerly Oarjokefolkopus. And in maybe the biggest blow, the Triple Rock Social Club closes for good after 19 vears.

RIP: Hüsker Dü's Grant Hart, 56; soul man Sonny Knight, 69; beloved door man at the Uptown Bar and elsewhere Ron Upton, 58; Chad Hanks, bassist for Minneapolis nu-metal band American Head Charge, 46.

2018

The goddam Super Bowl happens. Local fellas Jimmy Jam and Terry Lewis whip together an event called Super Bowl Live to showcase Minnesota music in a series of outdoor concerts on Nicollet Mall, where Idina Menzel is roasted by Minnesotans for suggesting on Twitter that 47 degrees is cold. A whole bunch of famous people come to town, including Cardi B, who draws fire for "appearing" at pricey events rather than performing, and not including Travis Scott, who's sued for ditching at a scheduled show at Myth. Justin Timberlake does a weak-ass Prince tribute during an otherwise acceptable halftime performance.

The Viking Bar, which had reopened just two years earlier, closes. Across the river in Dinkytown, though, the Varsity Theater begins booking music again. And the Parkway Theater on Chicago Avenue reopens, showing movies and booking comedy in addition to serving as a much needed music venue in south Minneapolis. But the biggest venue news of all is that the Armory



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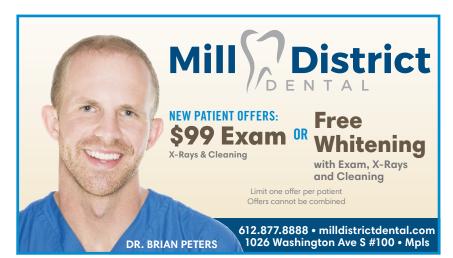
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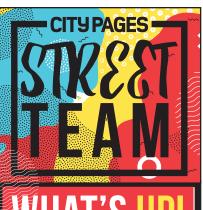
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WHAT'S UP!

MYSTERY CAFE: I'LL BE HOMIGIDAL FOR CURRENTAGE

Albee Humphrey used to be household name, but these days his star is fading. He's got one last shot at his big comeback – with a network televised Christmas special. There's celebrity guests, variety acts, and even rumor of a reunion with his former comedy partner who he hasn't spoken to in 20 years.

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opens as an 8,400-capacity performance space in downtown Minneapolis.

The local music community rallies around Aaron "Hix" Lee of Red Daughters after a mugger shoots and wounds him in northeast Minneapolis.

After Dessa sings the national anthem at the Twins home opener, a bald eagle flips out and attacks Mariners pitcher James Paxton. (Neither man nor fowl is injured.) The rest of Dessa's year goes much better: She releases an excellent new album, Chime, and her equally fine essay collection, My Own Devices.

Minnesota teen Kaitlyn Strom becomes an instant hero to millions (or at least three City Pages staffers) when she gets her head stuck in a truck tailpipe at the Winstock country music festival and declares: "Yeah I'm the tail pipe girl whachu know about it?"

First Avenue buys another club just up the road, the Fine Line Music Cafe, as well as the Fitzgerald Theater in St. Paul.

RIP: Viva Beck, beloved for the quirky cable-access TV show she put together with her husband, Jerry, for more than 20 years, Viva and Jerry's Country Music Videos, 79; Norm Rogers, the early Jayhawks drummer who went on to play with Cows and worked as a bartender at Brit's Pub for years after that, 61.

2019

A big year for former Minnesotan Lizzo, who returns to the Twin Cities to play a pair of shows at the Palace in the spring and again to play two nights at the Armory in the fall. She releases her first major label full-length, Cuz I Love You, and licenses the hell out of its first single, "Juice." But it's an older song, "Truth Hurts," that goes to number one—and stirs up controversy regarding its creation. Lizzo agrees to share credit with the Twitter user who came up with the line "I just took a DNA test, turns out I'm 100 percent that bitch," but fights off a pair of songwriters who claim they had a hand in writing the song.

Following his possibly unrelated run-in with the staff of the Palace Theatre, the Current cans Morning Show co-host Brian Oake for undisclosed reasons. He starts a podcast.

More sad venue closings: Neither Vieux Carre nor Lee's Liquor Lounge makes it through the year, and Duluth's Red Herring Lounge goes up for sale. The Nomad World Pub is sold and renamed Part Wolf, and Big V's continues booking live music under its new ownership.

RIP: Tony Glover, key figure in the Minneapolis folk-blues revival of the '60s, 79; Terry Katzman of Garage D'Or Records, 64; Ed Ackerson of Polara and BNLX, 54; blues great Willie Murphy, 79.



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BY SARAH BRUMBLE

ug on the door to Merlins Rest on any given day and you'll be greeted by the scent of freshly fried chips, a glint off well-oiled wood, clinking glasses, and—if you're very lucky—a cacophony of voices rising in harmony and unfurling like a welcome mat.

For 10 years now, the Longfellow nook better known for its Scotch bible, the occasional bagpiper, and a portal-like ability to channel the British Isles has played host to regular evenings where patrons gather for the sole purpose of singing together.

"Probably our biggest sing of the year is our pub caroling," says Steven Levine, a longtime die-hard of the unnamed group of singers who found each other through Morris dancing, historical reenactments, and shape-note singing at the bar. "We try very hard not to make it people coming and singing 'Joy to the World' and 'Rudolph,' though we do have kids coming and doing that."

This year's event will take place on the afternoon of Sunday, December 15. Unlike other places around town, Merlins' pub caroling draws from a very specific (and old) tradition that still thrives in the north of England, near Sheffield. You won't find ditties from American Christmas specials, nor the stuff of angelic choir boys holding candles; miss someone name-dropping the Virgin Mary and one could easily mistake these carols for drinking songs.

"A number of our members had experienced pub caroling in Sheffield, and said we should do that here," explains Nat Case, a cartographer by trade who was instrumental in the group's formation a decade ago and now acts as admin for a private Facebook group organizing some of these pub sings.

It all started 11 years ago at the Dubliner with a well-known sea shanty night, when attendees got to thinking about expanding the possibilities of communal singing. They developed a rotating schedule—expanded to involve more pub sings at Merlins—organized around ballads, gospel tunes, carols, and a quarterly wild-card slot (with hyper-specific themes chosen in advance, like "songs of the restless West" or a single Peter Bellamy opera sung front-to-back).

These events aren't well broadcast beyond Merlins' events calendar, despite taking place during regular business hours where they often fill half of the

CAROL BETTER

Not everyone goes to the pub for a pint. Some go to sing.



JIM PFAU

pub with anywhere between 50 and 100 participants. Unwitting bar patrons may find themselves enchanted or put off by the rumpus.

Alienating non-singers is a risk both Merlins and the Dubliner are willing to take—and part of what makes them such gems.

"It's very, very hard to find a commercial establishment that will let you come and

Everyone in the room knew the melody and all the words to every song, for hours. It felt impossible, like a heist, and it was a joy to behold.

Speculating from a comfortable distance on how these singers managed the room was great fun, making for one of the warmest afternoons spent at a bar in recent memory. In the end, we figured that's where the "pub" part came

"We try very hard not to make it people coming and singing 'Joy to the World' and 'Rudolph."

sing like that," says Levine, recounting times they've been kicked out of other bars for singing, "but Tracie Munce [Merlins' general manager] says, 'No, this is what we want this bar to be."

Your author was once one of these accidental bystanders. Watching dozens of individuals harmonize (mostly in tune!) to songs pulled from the ether without the use of notes was spellbinding.

in—that with a little liquid courage, they simply rolled with it in a way few would otherwise hazard.

"I didn't even realize it was a skill to pick up a chorus and sing it, because I always have—well or otherwise," Levine says, laughing. But still, leading a song is a skill—and scary for beginners. Part of bringing people into the fold involves catching that glimmer in a spectator's eye in time to reassure them, "Don't be afraid—just sing! We don't know it."

Back when the group was created, they set forth a few guidelines designed to build an immersive space where it's possible to lose oneself in sound.

They don't use books or sheet music. Same for instruments. Anyone may bring a song to sing, so long as it works well unamplified, has a simple chorus, and is meant to have a crowd as backup (which eliminates most music of the past 75 years). And all are welcome, including children, provided they don't expect coddling (thematic, sonic, or otherwise).

These aren't rules, per se. "There's a balance," says Levine. "The last thing you want to do is anything that puts a roadblock before somebody who really wants to be a part of this. On the other hand, you don't want... guitars."

For Case, this structure forms a means to an end. "My experience with this kind of singing had been these moments where I'm just in the middle of a song, the middle of a chorus, essentially, of people singing harmony all around. And that's my favorite part of the whole thing. Having a spotlight is not the point here."

In building a community where transcendence comes through blending, a wariness toward rogue guitars and a reverence for breaking the fourth wall in a pub(lic space) make perfect sense.

"You know how at the end of Shake-speare's *The Tempest* where Prospero just sort of gives it back to the audience?" Case asked, referencing the play's epilogue in which the magician both addresses and accuses the audience of trapping him on stage, entreating them to free him by applauding, pulling one final magic trick by drawing them into the spectacle. "I feel like [these sings are] a relatively low-key way of doing that."

Levine remains dedicated to the sings beyond the holidays for reasons as ethereal as they are different from Case's. "What

MERLINS REST 3601 E. Lake St. Minneapolis 612-216-2419 merlinsrest.com Merlins has provided for me, anyway, is the closest to my imagined fantasies of what this was like in the U.K., where a lot of the

tradition came from. It's romanticization of a time when everybody sang. I mean, that time never really existed, but I'd like to think it did."

Find them both caroling at Merlins this Sunday, belting their hearts out. Best of luck picking them out in the crowd.



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DOWN IN THE VALLEY

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AROUND TOWN













SATURDAY Party with Krampus and crew at SantaCon in Lowertown p. 23

SUNDAY WWE kicks ass, with plenty of props, at Target Center p. 25

WEDNESDAY 12.11

JACKIE KASHIAN

ACME COMEDY CO.

Jackie Kashian is working on a new album, but it's taking a little longer than usual. That's because in addition to headlining clubs across the U.S., she's been featuring for the likes of Brian Regan and Maria Bamford. "I need to do long sets to be able to put it together so it has an arc," she explains. "I do 25-minute sets in front of Brian and Maria, and I get to see their long sets-which are amazing, of course." At Acme, she'll get to do her full set plus a new chunk of material. Opening for Regan and Bamford has forced her to work on new material; both comics like to hear new stuff, as they normally don't get to see much standup apart from their own. Among other things Kashian is talking about these days is gender. "I'm a she/her," she says, "but there are more genders, and science has always known that there are more genders. But they never told us because they didn't think we could handle it—and they were not entirely wrong. But we can figure it out." 18+. 8 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday; 10:30 p.m. Friday and Saturday. \$20. 708 N. First St., Minneapolis; 612-338-6393. Through Saturday -P.F. WILSON

THURSDAY 12.12

HOLIDAYS 5TH ANNUAL GINGERBREAD WONDERLAND

NORWAY HOUSE

Each winter, the Norway House creates an entire exhibition made out of sugar, butter, more sugar, elbow grease, and sugar. To create this candyland, folks of all ages and skill sets are invited to bring in a handmade structure to display, thus creating a community. The results this year are pretty sweet, and include iconic Twin Cities structures as well as pieces of pure imagination. Folks should instantly recognize the St. Paul Cathedral, complete with a



COURTESY OF MINNESOTA DANCE THEATRE

gorgeous stained glass window and an inspired use of Hershey's Hugs. An incredibly detailed gingerbread Glensheen Mansion boasts clear windows lit from within. Awardwinning kids' creations include an ode to *Back to the Future* and a super-cool piece that features an icehouse on a lake with views of the creatures below. Be wowed, and pick up some ideas for your own projects this season. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Sundays. \$5. 913 E. Franklin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-871-2211. **Through January 5** –JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

JESSICA KIRSON

RICK BRONSON'S HOUSE OF COMEDY "I was funny kid, but I wasn't a fan of standup comedy," says comic Jessica Kirson. "I was a big fan of *Saturday Night Live*, as well as Carol Burnett. I

was just never exposed to standup. I think I would have liked it." It was at the behest of her grandmother that she finally tried it. After taking a class, Kirson took the plunge. Her years of watching SNL and The Carol Burnett Show informed her comedy almost from the start. "I wound up doing more characters, being sillier, and taking more risks than if I'd just told jokes." Besides doing standup, she's a frequent contributor to the *Howard Stern* Show, where she not only writes with the host's staff but calls in as various characters. Over the years, her style has developed into quite an eclectic presentation. "I still incorporate a lot of characters into my show," she notes. "My style is basically a mix of things. I do straight standup, I talk to myself with my back to the audience, I do crowd work. I can be dry, I can be crazy. It all depends on the vibe

in the room and what's going on, but it's all the kinds of things that make me laugh." 7:30 p.m. Thursday and Friday; 9:45 p.m. Friday; 7 and 9:30 p.m. Saturday. \$16. 408 E. Broadway, Mall of America, Bloomington; 952-858-8558. **Through Saturday —P.F. WILSON**

FRIDAY 12.13

DANCE

LOYCE HOULTON'S NUTCRACKER FANTASY

HISTORIC STATE THEATRE

As buoyant and hectic as a child's holiday dream, this Minnesota Dance Theatre's *Nutcracker* surges with nonstop dancing. Even the sets move, with shifting scrims, projections, and set pieces that evoke the transformative journey of young Marie Silberhaus. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 ▶



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CONTINUED FROM FRIDAY ▶

story begins at a Christmas party in 19th-century Germany, and unfolds through the eyes of Marie as her godfather, Drosselmeyer, takes her on an extraordinary adventure to the Land of Snow and the Kingdom of the Sugar Plum Fairy. From the idiosyncratic maneuvers of Drosselmeyer's marvelous toys-marionettes, wooden soldiers, and assorted dolls-to the battle scene where the intrepid Nutcracker defeats the wicked Rat Queen and her minions, this production captures the holiday spirit with just enough scary parts to keep the kids wide-eyed and alert. A blizzard of snowflakes sweeps Marie to a magic kingdom where dancers from many lands show their stuff and the Sugar Plum Fairy spins Marie out of her nightmare and into the land of happily ever after. All this as a 44-piece orchestra plays Tchaikovsky's iconic score, led by conductor Philip Brunelle. 7:30 p.m. Fridays; 3 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays; 1 p.m. Monday, December 23. \$30-\$75. 805 Hennepin Ave., Minneapolis; 612-339-7007. Through December 23 - LINDA SHAPIRO

BARHOPPING HOPPY HOLIDAY MAKER'S MARKET

URBAN GROWLER BREWING COMPANY Overcrowded department stores tend to spoil any potential for merriment. As a restorative antidote, gift seekers would do well to visit Urban Growler's Hoppy Holiday Maker's Market. Now marking its third year, the annual pop-up sets up shop in the brewery's Barrel Room, displaying creations from over 25 local vendors. Whether buying or browsing, visitors are welcome to linger over one-of-a-kind artisanal offerings, including handcrafted trinkets, delectable confections, vintage clothing, intricately designed jewelry, eco-friendly health and body products, and original sketches, prints, and paintings. At the Maker's Market, creativity is the most highly prized commodity. Best of all, visitors are welcome to shop with a freshly tapped ale in hand, concocted on-site by the superlative brewers at Urban Growler. 6 to 10 p.m. Free. 2325 Endicott St., St. Paul; 651-340-5793. -BRAD RICHASON

BARHOPPING

FIVE YEAR PARTY AT EASTLAKE

EASTLAKE CRAFT BREWERY

The Midtown Global Market is bigger than the sum of its many parts. So it's only fitting that its resident brewery,



JAMES RAMSAY PHOTOGRAPHY

Eastlake, is celebrating five years with a party that will stretch beyond its space to include neighbors Manny's Tortas and Taco Cat. For the brewery's anniversary, the wintertime Tsathoggua imperial stout is set to return. The beer, named after a toad-like god from Lovecraft lore, is aged in American oak and Spanish brandy barrels. You'll be able to try it at the party, as well as another variety aged in a port barrel. A new sour red ale, aged in a wine barrel, will also be on tap. There will be live screen-printing onsite, plus music from folk-rockers Wailing Loons and country group Pleasure Horse, While Friday night is the big party, the brewery is up to something special every night December 9-15. Grab a Tsathoggua on Wednesday, join the festivities on Friday, and return on Sunday night for a vegan meat raffle. 6 to 11 p.m. Free. 920 E. Lake St., Minneapolis; 612-224-9713. -LOREN GREEN

SATURDAY 12.14

SANTACON XII

LOWERTOWN ST. PAUL

SantaCon's resounding success can be largely attributed to its emphasis on community engagement. Unlike more profit-driven enterprises, entry to SantaCon is completely free, and requires no advance registration, wristbands, or waivers. In fact, the only strongly suggested stipulation is that participants embrace the camaraderie of their fellow yuletide revelers. Attendees are encouraged to wear holiday finery,

whether that be a gloriously garish Christmas sweater or an eccentric variation on the scarlet suit of old Kris Kringle. The merriment kicks off at Dark Horse Pub and Eatery with a familyfriendly hour during which the more courageous kids can plead their case to Krampus, the horned demon tasked with punishing wayward children. (Juvenile miscreants can seek out Santa Lawyer, aka Emmitt Robertson, an event sponsor/practicing attorney committed to representing nonprofits.) Around 10 p.m., Christmas tunes will ring out as the Macalester College Bagpipe Band leads a jolly procession through the winter wonderland of Mears Park, before concluding at the just/us eatery, where the party will continue until close. Follow the shenanigans on Twitter at @santacon55101.7 p.m. to 2 a.m. Free. 221 Fifth St. E., St. Paul. -BRAD RICHASON

FOOD/HOLIDAY 2019 HOLIDAY BAKE SALE

UNION DEPOT

Cookie sampling is a holiday tradition for just about anyone with a sweet tooth. At the annual bake sale at the Union Depot, you can snack your way through a variety of treats without having to worry about burning something in the oven. Nearly two dozen sugar shillers will be on hand, offering delights including macarons, boozy tarts, gourmet chocolates, cupcakes, and cookies. Participating businesses include the Buttered Tin, T-Rex Cookie Company, Sara's Tipsy Pies, and Cookie Cart, to name a few. The event is hosted inside; should you venture outdoors, you'll discover the European

Christmas Market, which opened last week. Both events are free, though food shelf donations will be collected to benefit Merrick Community Services. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Free. 214 E. Fourth St., St. Paul; 651-202-2700. —JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

BARHOPPING JOURNEYS + SIDEQUESTS TAP TAKEOVER

FAIR STATE BREWING COOPERATIVE In addition to making flagship brews for their pub, craft beer makers often take on a side project where they can get really creative and experiment. For Niko Tonks, co-founder and head brewer at Fair State, that means making a variety of weird beers for the cooperative's monthly beer service, Journeys + Sidequests. This Saturday, he'll be taking over his own taproom to offer a few pours of his past hits. That includes the Smoked Peach & Apricot, a mixed-fermentation sour made with grilled peaches and apricot puree. The Neapolitan Stout, a vegan brew with chocolate, vanilla, and strawberry, is meant to mimic the popular ice cream. Bee's Knees is a light drink made in gin barrels with local honey added, and SuperKveik is a Norwegian farmhouse ale with elderberry and tangerine. Try them all if you're feeling adventurous. Noon to midnight. Free. 2506 Central Ave. NE, Minneapolis; 612-444-3209. –JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

NERDERY IF: A VERY STAR WARS CABARET

THE LOFT LITERARY CENTER The Loft Literary Center's "If" series examines and celebrates speculative writing. This week, five writers will pontificate on Star Wars. The event, titled "A Very Star Wars Cabaret," isn't a traditional musical cabaret, though there may be interpretive dancing, possibly some sci-fi erotica, and other surprises. Mostly, it's a geektastic reading of fan fiction, cultural criticism, and fantastical elucidations. The lineup includes some of the Twin Cities' top nerds, including poet, playwright, and children's book author Saymoukda Duangphouxay Vongsay; novelist and educator Shannon Gibney; theater artist Mathew Kessen; puppeteer and prose writer Luis Lopez; and decolonial thinker/writer Jodi Byrd.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 ▶

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CONTINUED FROM SATURDAY ▶

HOLIDAY FIF

TARGET FIELD STATION

Free movies in the park don't stop just because we have a foot of snow. We do things year-round here. Holidazzle kicked off its outdoor movie series with Elf, and this weekend, Target Field Station is putting its space to good use to screen the beloved holiday flick. The family-friendly film follows grown man Buddy (Will Ferrell), who leaves the North Pole to find his human family. Raised by elves, he experiences culture shock upon traveling to New York City, and heartwarming hilarity ensues. Come dressed for the weather; blankets, hand warmers, and lawn chairs will help, as will free hot chocolate and popcorn for all. 3 to 5 p.m. Free. 1 Twins Way, Minneapolis; 952-937-0108. -JESSICA ARMBRUSTER

SUNDAY 12.15

SPORTS

WWE PRESENTS: TABLES, **LADDERS & CHAIRS**

TARGET CENTER

The last time WWE Tables, Ladders & Chairs was in Minneapolis, a sevenfoot demon buried a mountain man in a pile of chairs and threw him into the back of a garbage truck. The 2019 edition of the WWE's annual celebration of furniture-based violence is sure to be a melee on the same scale. Acid-spitting heel Asuka (who made her debut at 2017's TLC at the Target Center) will be defending her

Women's Tag Team Championship against the super-team of Charlotte and Becky Lynch, and former Vikings signee Roman Reigns will take on the obnoxious King Corbin, with both matches taking place in the event's signature hardcore style. Also, Rusev will try to get revenge on Bobby Lashley, who has been mercilessly cuckolding the Bulgarian in one of the oddest storylines going into the pay-per-view. Someone's getting a concussion, and you won't want to miss it. 5:30 p.m. \$28-\$503. 600 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-673-0900. —Jerard fagerberg

BARHOPPING MIRACLE AT LAWLESS

LAWLESS DISTILLING

While many bars throw up a few decorations during the holidays, Lawless takes it to the next level, getting festive as shit. Now that winter has arrived, they've gone full North Pole, loading every inch of their ceilings and walls with twinkling lights, tinsel wreaths, and candy-colored ornaments. Their menu is changing to reflect the holidays, too; one whimsical concoction teased on Facebook features cotton candy in a gimlet glass. Sundays will be particularly festive, with Minneapolis Craft Market hosting the Hygge Holiday Market in the back room, where you'll find a different variety of makers each week. 4 to 11 p.m. Sundays through Tuesdays; 4 p.m. to midnight Wednesdays through Saturdays. Free. 2619 28th Ave. S., Minneapolis; 612-276-1000. Through January 1 - JESSICA ARMBRUSTER









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FILM

ESTRANGEMENT THINGS

Scarlett Johansson and Adam Driver consciously uncouple in *Marriage Story*



BY BRYAN MILLER

ome artists work in clay or marble, some in oils or watercolors or collage. Noah Baumbach works in film, and in breakups.

The writer-director is angling to be the poet laureate of parting, having covered the college split in his debut, Kicking and Screaming, the effects of divorce on children in The Squid and the Whale, and now the effects of children on divorce in Marriage Story. (Even when Baumbach's characters do manage to stay attached, they're hung up on a previous relationship, a la Mr. Jealousy.)

If that sounds grueling... well, it kind of is. Although here, Baumbach is judicious with the shouting and melodrama, instead focusing on the quietly frustrating complexities of two flawed people trying to do their best after their best has already proven not to be enough.

Nicole (Scarlett Johansson) is a New York theater actress ready to move on to bigger opportunities in Los Angeles after largely surrendering her life and career to her work-obsessed writer-director husband, Charlie (Adam Driver). They're wary of one another but willing to remain amicable in their separation-that is, until a disagree-

ment over custody of their son, Henry (Azhy Robertson), leads to an arms race of high-priced lawyers and a simmering antagonism.

Baumbach's story is inspired by his own messy uncoupling from actress Jennifer Jason Leigh, and the conflict in Marriage Story certainly feels lived-through. Baumbach, as both a dramatist and a comedic writer, has a keen sense of observation. It's in his eloquent articulation of these tiny injustices and mundane frustrations that both the movie and the characters come alive.

And it's to Baumbach's credit that his empathy is evenly distributed among the characters. Nicole and Charlie both have moments of villainy and vulnerability. While Charlie's lawyer (Alan Alda) enumerates the ways in which the law is slanted against the husband, Nicole's lawyer (Laura Dern) brings down the house with a dynamite speech about the Christian parenthood template setting mothers up against the impossible perfection of the Virgin Mary while glorifying absentee fathers.

(Baumbach's not so humble, though, that he doesn't pause the film briefly to award Charlie, his proxy, a MacArthur genius grant.)

MARRIAGE STORY

directed by Noah Baumbach now playing, Edina Cinema and on Netflix

That's the rub with Baumbach-his movies are urban, and urbane, to the extreme. The universality of the emotional truths is sometimes at odds with the narrow experience of the upper-class artist characters. Someone's father is always being awarded or anthologized. Baumbach makes Whit Stillman look like Ken Loach's plumber.

Baumbach's collaborations with Greta Gerwig have a relatability and vivacity sometimes lacking in his solo projects. There's plenty of middle ground between populist pandering and lamenting that your ex-wife is going to take half your genius grant money if you don't agree to do prominent directing work in Los Angeles.

Credit to Baumbach for making an empathetic movie about antipathy. It's a terrific showcase for the two leads, yet Johansson's and Driver's performances aren't oppositional so much as they are inextricably entangled. Their characters can be pulled away from one another, but never entirely separated, and therein lie both the tragedy and the humanity.



HOLY HILARITY

Open Eye's Pageant is a subversive treat



MARK VANCLEAVE

BY JAY GABLER

n Sunday afternoon, as audience members moved to squeeze into the last available seats in a packed Open Eye Figure Theatre, a gently smiling man with a shock of gray hair that seemed to defy gravity sat a few rows from the stage with his arm around his young granddaughter. Both were festively decked in red, the girl sporting a Santa hat.

The man was one of many attendees excited to welcome a new generation to a play that's been a Twin Cities holiday tradition for longer than Holidazzle, longer than Santa at the Mall of America, longer than National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. He was Michael Sommers: writer, director, and designer of Open Eye's Holiday Pageant.

The first *Holiday Pageant* was staged in 1985 in the living room of Sommers and Susan Haas, who welcomed Sunday's crowd as Open Eye's executive director. "Now we just have a bigger living room," she said with a grin.

Not too much bigger, though, which is part of the show's charm. Despite the impeccable craft and professional performances, the *Holiday Pageant* has never lost touch with a childlike wonder at the power of live theater to transport an audience—in this case, to a stable of some renown just over 2,000 years ago.

The family spirit is accentuated by the fact that two adult children of Sommers and Haas star in this year's pageant. Noah Sommers Haas plays the hapless Joseph, dons Father Winter's beard, and voices the drunken shepherd puppet Mak. Zoe Jethro

THE HOLIDAY PAGEANT

Open Eye Figure Theatre 506 E. 24th St., Minneapolis 612-874-6338; through December 22

Sommers Haas switches nimbly from Teufel (one of Lucifer's minor minions) to Matin (an angel aspiring to earn her wings).

The premise of the pageant, playful but also a little dark, is that Lucifer (Pearce Bunting, looking like an aging glam rocker in dark eyeliner and flamboyant scarf) is stalking the land, looking for an opportunity to make malice as Joseph and Mary (a hilarious Liz Howls) journey to Bethlehem. By the end of the show, Christ has been born but we're reminded that the divine child is destined for a bitter end.

The 80-minute pageant will enrapture the right kids, but when deciding whether to bring your own, be aware that it includes some brilliantly grotesque puppetry, incorporates rhyming diction that occasionally requires close attention, and assumes a working knowledge of how babies are made in the conventional manner.

It was, of course, a highly unconventional process that left Mary great with the Son of God. The play's biggest gasps and giggles come when the Holy Spirit arrives to bless the virgin's womb in a sequence you might call orgasmic, except that word isn't quite adequate for an experience that's so... well, divine.

With live music (Susan Haas herself plays three instruments) and a "celestial choir" of merry voices, Open Eye's *Holiday Pageant* has returned from recent years' hiatus with just as much warmth and weirdness as ever. Hallelujah!





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MERKULES

THE CABOOZE, WEDNESDAY 12.11

Like many speedy, nattering Eminem acolytes, Merkules has a secret soft side, and the Canadian rapper's new Special Occasion reveals a tough guy with a heart of gold, fond of childishly whiny ad-libs, grandiose piano chords, and therapeutic venting about his neuroses and career ambitions. His "Shape of You" remix is even grodier than the original. 18+.7 p.m. \$20-\$70.917 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-338-6425. -LUCAS FAGEN

MARIA MULDAUR & JOHN JORGENSON

DAKOTA, WEDNESDAY 12.11

This hot duo definitely knows how to swing, promising jazz-infused naughty and nice holiday classics and "gems from the '20s and '30s." Maria Muldaur has charmed her way through an encyclopedia of American roots music, her dusky voice adding tiers of character to vintage musical artifacts. Virtuoso guitarist/

multi-instrumentalist John Jorgenson has a similarly broad portfolio and even played Django Reinhardt on film. 7 p.m. \$35-\$50. 1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-1010. -RICK MASON

MORGAN EVANS

VARSITY THEATER, THURSDAY 12.12

In the grand tradition of Australian country, Morgan Evans has mastered the form as a synthetic, hooky, covertly erotic pop vehicle, one that abounds with arena drums, ringing guitar figures, goofily hummable tunes, and sly electronic touches like the wah-wah filigrees on "Day Drunk." His "American" belongs on the same playlist as Taylor Swift's "London Boy." 18+.7 p.m. \$25-\$42+.1308 Fourth St. SE, Minneapolis; 612-604-0222. -LUCAS FAGEN

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER **ORCHESTRA**

ORCHESTRA HALL, FRIDAY 12.13 Stylishly setting the standard for contemporary big bands, the 15-strong Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, led by trumpeter

Wynton Marsalis, boasts a world-class lineup featuring the likes of reed players Sherman Irby and Victor Goines. With a sugarplum dusting of Marsalis' New Orleans flair, the JLCO will swing through seasonal baubles likely from the band's two volumes of Big Band Holidays. The latest cool vule disc features live cuts from recent annual shows with stellar vocal guests, including Catherine Russell and Aretha Franklin, who seriously jingles on "O Tannenbaum." 8 p.m. \$50.75-\$120.75. 1111 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-371-5656. – RICK MASON

DAVID ARCHULETA

CEDAR CULTURAL CENTER, SATURDAY 12.14

Kelly Clarkson and Carrie Underwood are exceptions that prove the rule: American Idol winners rarely stick around. On the other hand, there is David Archuleta, who has now released his second Christmas album after a brief hiatus to do Mormon missionary work and is still touring after finishing second a decade ago in the show's seventh season. 7 p.m. \$25/\$30.416 Cedar Ave., Minneapolis; 612-338-2674. -LUCAS FAGEN

THE JOY FORMIDABLE

FINE LINE, SATURDAY 12.14

From The Big Roar to their new AAARTH, the Joy Formidable make loud, anguished noises and name albums after them. Where once the Welsh dream-pop band built walls of streamlined, buzzy guitar sound that rang out with epic, yearning bravado, they've now incorporated quieter moments of contemplation, isolated electronic shimmers, and weirdly tuned acoustic guitars to match a prevailing mood of political anxiety. With Twen. 18+. 7:30 p.m. \$25/\$40.318 First Ave. N., Minneapolis; 612-338-8388. -LUCAS FAGEN

BONERAMA

DAKOTA, SUNDAY 12.15

The bones here are of the "trom-" persuasion, but the musical orthopedics of the veteran ensemble Bonerama hardly take a skeletal approach to its raucous mix of funk, rock, jazz, and native New Orleansiana. This show is based on Bonerama Plays Zeppelin, which revises 10 Led Zep classics as if Page and co. emerged from the bayous. Three trombones and Sousaphone juggle guitar phrases; muscular rhythms pick up Meters nuanced funk; soulful vocals approximate Plant. Most of all, blazing jams lagniappe-up Zep's original spirit, virtually moving the Misty Mountains to where the levee actually did break.7 p.m. \$35-\$45.1010 Nicollet Mall, Minneapolis; 612-332-1010. -RICK MASON









Friday, December 13th

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FREE WILL ASTROLOGY

>> By Rob Brezsny

ARIES (March 21-April 19): "Nobody knows really what they're doing," says Aries comedian Conan O'Brien. "And there are two ways to go with that information," he continues. "One is to be afraid, and the other is to be liberated, and I choose to be liberated by it." I hope you'll be inspired by O'Brien's example in the coming weeks, Aries. I suspect that if you shed your worries about the uncertainty you feel, you'll trigger an influx of genius. Declaring your relaxed independence from the temptation to be a know-it-all will bless you with expansive new perspectives and freedom to move.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Creativity expert Roger von Oech tells us. "Everyone has a 'rick musela' Vou us. "Everyone has a 'risk muscle.' You keep it in shape by trying new things. If you don't, it atrophies. Make a point of using it at least once a day." Here's what I'll add to his advice. If your risk muscle is flabby right now, the coming weeks will be an excellent time to whip it into better shape. Start with small, modest risks, and gradually work your way up to bigger and braver ones. And what should you do if your risk muscle is already well-toned? Drawn and scheme shout embarking on a melier lone-term weatury at but is he Dream and scheme about embarking on a major, long-term venture that is the robust embodiment of a smart gamble.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Many people engage in laughably feeble attempts to appear witty by being cynical—as if by exuding sardonic irony and sneering pessimism they could prove their mettle as brilliant observers of modern culture. An example is this lame wisecrack from humorist David Sedaris: If you're looking for sympathy you'll find it between s—and syphilis in the dictionary." I bring this to your attention in the hope of earlying you to supid induction in creativing we pessiment withing the conjuine. coaxing you to avoid indulging in gratuitous pessimism during the coming weeks. For the sake of your good health, it's important for you to be as openminded and generous-spirited as possible. And besides that, pessimism will

CANCER (June 21-July 22): "You can shop online and find whatever you're looking for," writes pundit Paul Krugman, "but bookstores are where you find what you weren't looking for." That's a good principle to apply in every area of your life. It's always smart to know exactly what you need and want, but sometimes-like now-it's important that you put yourself in position to encounter what you need and want but don't realize that you need and

PLEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Bachianas Brasileiras is a nine-part piece of music that blends Brazilian folk music with the compositional style of Johann Sebastian Bach. The poet Anne Sexton relied on it, letting it re-play ceaselessly during her long writing sessions. My painter friend Robin sometimes follows a similar method with Leonard Cohen's album Tan New Songs, allowing it to cycle for hours as she works on her latest masterpiece. In accordance with astrological omens, linvite you to select a new theme song or collection of theme songs to inspire your intense efforts in behalf of your labors of love in the coming weeks. It's a favorable time to explore the generative power of invoise. Virgical shoession generative power of joyous, lyrical obsession.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): "I've spent my life butting my head against other people's lack of imagination," mourned Virgo musician Nick Cave, who's renowned for his original approach to his craft. I'm bringing this to your attention because! suspect you will be endowed with an extra fertile imagination in the coming weeks. And I would hate for you to waste time and energy trying to make full use of it in the presence of inflences that would resist and discourage you. Therefore, I'll cheer you on as you seek out people and situations that enhance your freedom to express your imagination in its

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): A scholar counted up how often the Bible delivers the command "Fear not!" and "Don't be afraid!" and similar advice. The number was 145. I don't think that approach to regulating behavior works very well. To be constantly thinking about what you're not supposed to works very well. to be constantly thinking about what your en or supposed to do and say and think about rends to strengthen and reinforce what you're not supposed to do and say and think about. I prefer author Elizabeth Gilbert's strategy. She writes, "I don't try to kill off my fear. I make all that space for it. Heaps of space. I allow my fear to live and breathe and stretch out its legs comfortably. It seems to me the less I fight my fear, the less it fights back." That's the method I recommend for you, Libra—especially in the coming week.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Isaac Newton (1642-1726) was one of history's most influential scientists and a key contributor to physics, astronomy, mathematics, and optics. His mastery of the nuances of human relationships was less developed, however. He had one close friendship with a Swiss mathematician, though he broke it off shruptly after four years. And his historiches acrea but he buyer bed sow with peethy or grow. What I filed his biographers agree that he never had sex with another person. What I find most curious, however, is the fact that he refused to even meet the brilliant French philosopher Voltaire, who reached out to him and asked to get together. I trust you won't do anything like that in the coming weeks, Scorpio. In fact, I urge you to be extra receptive to making new acquaintances, accepting invitations, and expanding your circle of influence.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): How did humans figure out that a Invarious fabric could be made from the cocons of insect larvae?

Ancient Chinese sage Confucius told the following story. One day in 2460 B.C., 14-year-old Chinese princess XI Ling Shi was sitting under a mulberry tree sipping tea. A silk worm's cocon fell off a branch and landed in her drink. She was curious, not bothered. She unrolled the delicate structure and got the idea of using the threads to weave a fabric. The rest is history. I foresee a silk-warm's cocon-falling-invarious-cure-off-each store of sweet in your future. silk-worm's-cocoon-falling-in-your-cup-of-tea type of event in your future, Sagittarius. Be alert for it.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): "It is the soul's duty to be loyal to its CAPRICORN (Uec. 22-Jan. 19): It is the soul's duty to be loyal to its own desires," wrote Capricorn author Rebecca West. "It must abandon itself to its master passion." That's a high standard to live up to! But then you Capricorns have substantial potential to do just that: become the champions of devoting practical commitment to righteous causes. With that in mind, Ill ask you: How are you doing in your work to embody the ideal that Rebecca West articulated? Is your soul loyal to its deepest desires? Has it abandoned itself to its master passion? Take inventory-and make any corrections, if

 AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): I would never try to talk you into downplaying or denying your suffering. I would never try to convince you that the pain you have experienced is mild or tolerable or eminently manageable. Who among us has the wisdom to judge the severity or intractability of anyone else's afflictions? Not I, But in the coming months, I will ask you to consider the possibility that you have the power-perhaps more than you realize-to diminish your primal aches and angst. I will encourage you to dream of healing yourself in ways that you have previously imagined to be impossible.

Y PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): "You owe it to us all to get on with what you're good at," wrote Piscean poet W. H. Auden. In other words, you have a responsibility to develop your potential and figure out how to offer your nave a responsibility to develop your potential and rigure out now to order your best gifts. It's not just a selfish act for you to fulfill your promise; it's a generous act of service to your fellow humans. So how are you doing with that assignment, Pisces? According to my analysis, you should be right in the middle of raising your efforts to a higher octave; you should be discovering the key to activating the next phase of your success—which also happens to be the next phase of your ability to bestow blessings on others.

freewillastrology@freewillastrology.com

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ANIMAL TRAIL

BY BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY

Across

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- 19 Otherwise
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- 24 Altiplano plateau range
- "You bet," poetically 26
- 27 Like an easy puzzle
- 30 Hedge fund manager
- Garfield's foil 34
- 35 "BoJack Horseman" voice actor
- 37 Chop
- With 42-Across, beginning 39 skier's spot, and a hint to this puzzle's theme
- 41 "You're kidding me!"
- See 39-Across 42 44
- Part of a nor'easter forecast
- 45 Many residents of Baku
- 48 Condo listing data
- 49 Georgia's capital
- 51 Lemon-peeling tool
- Blues on some 53 scoreboards
- 54 **Until now**
- Beer with a red 56 triangle logo
- Third-party money

- accounts
- Beach party, say
- "Weapons of Math
- Destruction" author Cathy
- In a wild and crazy way 67
- Microsoft browser
- Candy maker in the book "Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator"
- 70 Hockey maneuver
- _track (insult song) 71
- "I have to tell you something"
- From the top

Down

- "Back In Black" rockers
- 2 Prepare water for pasta
- 3 cheese
- Come across as perfect
- Think tank proposal 5
- 6 Maine-to-Florida rte.
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- Maze answer
- 9 Stylish, as suits
- December holiday 10
- Princess who sings 11 "Into The Unknown"
- 12 Bug repellent
- 15 Mock, in a way
- Colin Jost's show, for 21 short
- Errs at the pinball hall 23
- 25 Tapas bar alcoholic order
- Mongol's desert Extracted chemical (or
- what Sherlock Holmes might do, without the

- first letter)
- 29 Narrow shoe size Fruit-flavored drink 31
- 32 In need of a few bucks
- 33 Reservation home
- Has second feelings about 36
- 38 Sign of use 40
- Resort on the Black Sea 43 1954 Federico Fellini film
- 46 Real estate database site
- Springfield bartender 47
- 50 Problems
- 52 FU predecessor
- 55 Tissot rival
- 56 Ran, as mascara
- Maker of the Q3, Q5, Q7, 57 and O8 models
- 58 Droops
- 59 Organic compound
- 61 Warning of a sort
- Socially aware 62 63
- Alter
- Brian in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

Last Week's Answer

S	0	F	Т	Α		Α	В	Е	Α	М		Т	U	G
С	Ρ	L	U	S		S	Α	Μ	S	Α		Α	Ν	0
Н	Ε	Α	D	Υ		S	Н	0	С	Κ	Α	Ν	D	Α
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Z	Α	S		G	Н	Ε	Ν	Т		Α	D	Е	S	
			W	Ε	0	U	Т	Н	Ε	R	Ε			
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0	L	Т	Ν		С	Α	М	Е	R	0	Ν	С	R	0
Ν	0	Х	Т	0	U	S			Υ	Α	С	Κ	Е	D
Ν	Т	В	Е	L	L	Υ	U	Ρ		S	Α	L	Е	М
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Т	Н	Χ		F	S	Т	0	Ρ		S	Ε	Т	0	Ν



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Kink Monsters

How can I convince my husband to enjoy vanilla sex?

y husband and I (straight male/bifemale couple) have been married 15 years. We are in our early 40s. When we met, he was inexperienced and crippled by shame from having grown up in an extremely sex-negative

atmosphere. I have no hang-ups about sex and was happy to get him involved in some more adventurous stuff, but he quickly became obsessed with kink. I'm happy to play along with fantasies and role-play, bondage, domination, anal sex/pegging, having moresomes, etc. But sometimes I'd like to have gentle and slow "unadorned" sex with an attentive partner who calls me by name, compli-

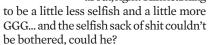
ments me, and does things he knows I enjoy. My husband has been seeing a therapist for some years. We also went to this therapist for couples therapy, and he gave us some "exercises" to tone down my husband's desire for perfectly scripted kink "scenes." My husband was either not able or not willing to try them, and I gave up. He basically can't maintain an erection without (1) a complicated script with roles and props and costumes and toys or (2) going through the motions of romantic sex as long as I keep up a constant stream of "in-character" dirty talk, which makes it impossible for me to be in the moment. I've urged him to get more involved in the local kink scene without me, but he's obsessed with this imagined moment where I "awaken" and join him in his obsessions. I find this condescending and stupid. Just because I can enjoy kink play doesn't mean I'll ever be someone who gasps with excitement at someone dangling from the ceiling by the clamps on their nipples. It doesn't shock or disgust me, it just kind of bores me. It feels like watching someone fill their kitchen with every gaudy, expensive, chrome radish peeler and strawberry diddler when they can't even boil an egg. Is there a trick to reducing your partner's dependence on kink? Or a way to make kink more interesting to yourself?

BORED BY OBSESSIVE KINKSTER

You must feel like you created a kink monster. But you didn't! I mean, you did meet this inexperienced, sexually repressed guy, and encourage him to let go of shame, and give him permission to be a little more sexually adventurous... and 15 years later, you're stuck with this selfish asshole so dependent on kinks that you've come to dread having sex with him. But your husband was always the kinkster he is now; he just needed permission to

admit to being who he is.

Now here you are, writing to me in the hopes that I can magically cause your husband to become less dependent on his kinks or "awaken" in you a similarly obsessive interest. We both know neither is going to happen, because you're not going to get kinkier and you've already tried to get him to rein in his kinks. That's what the counseling was about, right? Him learning



Both of your proposed fixes are basically pipe dreams, and I suspect you're not really interested in either. Because what you really want is right here: "Sometimes I'd like to have gentle and slow 'unadorned' sex with an attentive partner who calls me by name, compliments me, and does things to my body he knows I enjoy." (Emphasis mine.) I don't think it's an accident that you wrote "attentive partner" instead of "loving husband" in that sentence, because deep down you know your husband isn't interested in doing those things.

You want to have loving, tender, connected sex with someone who cares about you. And the obvious fix here, the easiest work-around, the reasonable accommodation... it's obvious, isn't it? You need to take the advice you've been giving your husband and go find yourself a play partner or two—for vanilla sex. If you can find someone who can give you the kind of simple, passionate, connected sex you no longer get in your marriage, perhaps you'll come to resent your husband less and your desire for kink with him will rebound.



Dan Savage

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